How can research help to improve care and outcomes for individuals receiving post-acute and long-term care? How can academic-industry collaboration evaluate practices, technology, and new ideas to assess impact and translate successes into practice?

Brown’s “Q&I Center” links researchers with providers to identify, test, and spread innovations that improve lives and outcomes.

The Q&I Center is an independent research center formed by the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), a national provider trade association, at Brown.

Mission

To test and disseminate interventions to improve care for individuals receiving post-acute and long-term care.

Approach

At the Q&I Center, we partner with innovators (providers, researchers, or others) who have developed transformative strategies to improve quality of life and care. We work with these innovators to seek funding to prove their interventions effective and/or to spread successes widely.

We use “pragmatic methods” to ensure findings are applicable in real-world conditions. This reflects our team’s experience working with providers and on quality improvement—and, most importantly, our desire to ensure that we can translate successes into practice.

Expertise

AHCA/NCAL selected Brown as the site for the Q&I Center because of Brown’s wealth of expertise in gerontology, program evaluation, and data.

Researchers focusing on gerontology have received $100M+ in funding since 2000, attesting to their reputation and success.

These researchers are experts in post-acute and long-term care, and are among our many collaborators.
Using Data to Find & Test Innovation

Brown’s national data enable the Q&I Center to evaluate innovative strategies to improve care and outcomes.

Example: We found greater improvement in dementia behaviors and antipsychotic medication use among residents at facilities implementing MUSIC & MEMORY, an individualized music therapy program, vs. residents at pair-matched control sites. This led us to partner with MUSIC & MEMORY, Inc. on a grant to create an implementation guide.

Ensuring Methods Are Practical

The Q&I Center uses pragmatic methods, such as cluster-randomized trials, to ensure that interventions are applicable in real-world conditions.

Example: We randomized 823 nursing centers to use standard- or high-dose influenza vaccine as a protocol-driven approach. Hospitalization was 1% lower among residents receiving the high-dose vaccine. If 100,000 residents were vaccinated, this would translate to 1,000 fewer hospitalizations.

Translating Findings into Practice

Q&I Center studies include testing how to disseminate interventions, once proven successful.

Example: In a 360-facility trial, we are testing a strategy to disseminate video-assisted advance care planning decision-support tools. We will examine outcomes among nursing center residents with advanced dementia.

Obtaining Diverse Funding

We seek funding from a broad array of sources. Current funding includes:

- AHCA/NCAL
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- Donations
- Foundations
- National Institutes of Health
- Pharmaceutical companies
- State agencies

Opportunities for Providers

- Volunteer to serve as research sites in a study
- Implement interventions, once proven effective
- Share interventions or best practices to be considered for testing & dissemination
- Suggest priority topics or needs for future research
- Refer providers, researchers, and others to the Q&I Center for networking & collaboration

Opportunities for Giving

- Current-use funds
  - Identify, vet & seek grants for promising interventions
  - Hire graduate students to assist with priorities & develop applied skills
- Directed donations (when needed)
  - Accelerate specific, high-priority studies
  - In lieu of grant funding

Leadership

Rosa Baier, MPH has more than 14 years of experience in post-acute and long-term care quality improvement. This informs her approach to Q&I Center studies: combining rigorous methods with the flexibility necessary to implement interventions in real-world conditions.

Vincent Mor, PhD is an internationally-known researcher whose expertise centers on variation in older adults’ use of services and outcomes. He was one of the Minimum Data Set (MDS) authors and is the architect of the national database that the Q&I Center uses for evaluation.

The Q&I Center’s seven-person Advisory Council includes academic and industry experts.